

Smuggled Book Indicts Soviet Science System

LONDON (AP)—A noted Soviet scientist, placed in a mental hospital by Communist authorities last spring because of his views, has produced a book, smuggled to the West, which severely indicts the Communist system for its restrictions on scientific freedom.

The smuggled manuscript, published yesterday by Macmillan and Co. in the original Russian, is called "The Medvedev Papers: the Plight of Soviet Science." It is by Dr. Zhores A. Medvedev, 45, a geneticist who headed a department at the Obninsk Institute of Medical Radiology. A translated excerpt appeared in Nature, an international scientific journal, and full English versions will be published next year in Britain and the United States.

Medvedev was detained by Soviet authorities for three weeks in a mental hospital last May because he challenged the system. His release resulted from strong protests lodged by fellow Russian scientists, but at present he is said to be unemployed.

Bureaucratic Evasions

The published excerpt of his book told how Medvedev was refused permission in 1966 to attend a symposium at Sheffield University, where he was invited to give a key lecture on "Molecular Aspects of Aging." He listed a maze of bureaucratic evasions that prevented him from attending.

Instead, Medvedev said, on the day the lecture was scheduled, he and others from four laboratories took their turn with other employees of city organizations in harvesting potatoes outside Obninsk.

"Dr. Medvedev has written a constructive criticism of the present arrangements and not a piece of subversive literature," said Nature. "It is earnestly to be hoped that it will be so regarded in the Soviet Union."

"Medvedev is not at all a subversive character—he is a patriot," said a spokesman for Macmillan's. "His book could do a lot to increase the flow of information and ideas between East and West."

Underground Seminars

In the Russian edition, Medvedev claimed that Prof. Timofeev-Resovskii, a renowned geneticist, had to hold underground seminars in a labor camp when T. D. Lysenko's now-discredited genetic theories dominated official Russian thinking.

Soviet science, Medvedev argued, is forced to lag behind the West because its scientists are denied full contact with colleagues abroad.

Information reaches them slowly only through official channels, he wrote, and great waste results from unnecessary duplication of effort. He claimed the Soviet Union, instead of ordering equipment already developed in the West, makes expensive copies of it, and it is frequently obsolete before it is made.

Macmillan's declined to say just how Medvedev's manuscript was brought to London, but said it reached the West in separate sections earlier this year. Royalties from the book will be held in trust for Medvedev by three western scientists, the publisher said.

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